



Vandenberg Air Force Base Installation Restoration Program Site 31 Fact Sheet



Vandenberg Air Force Base, California

July 2000

Installation Restoration Program

BACKGROUND

Site 31 is located in the northern half of Vandenberg AFB, California. The site is a former Missile Launch facility (576-C), and is approximately two miles north of San Antonio Creek, on Pike Road (see map on back page). The site was used in the early 1960s for Atlas E missile launches, an above ground "coffin" style launcher, as opposed to a gantry or silo.

A concrete-lined retention basin on the southeast side of the launch pad contains approximately 300 cubic yards of sediment. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides, metals, and petroleum hydrocarbons have been identified. Approximately 360,000 gallons of impounded stormwater are contained in the retention basin and in an adjacent tank vault. The California red-legged frog, federally listed as threatened, has also been observed in the retention basin.



Site 31 retention basin.

SITE 31 STATUS

Vandenberg AFB has prepared an engineering evaluation/cost analysis (EE/CA) for Site 31 as part of a Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) non-time-critical interim removal action (IRA). The purpose of an IRA is to reduce risks at a site prior to completion of the remedial investigation. Evaluation of remedial alternatives is based on technical feasibility, reasonable cost, time constraints, and human health and ecological impacts. In this case, the EE/CA was used to evaluate and compare technological alternatives for removal and disposal of contaminants in retention basin sediments. The EE/CA was also used to evaluate and compare alternative methods for removing the California red-legged frog, a threatened amphibian under the Endangered Species Act, before removing the contaminated sediments. This EE/CA is not yet ready for public review and comment. Vandenberg is waiting for United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to first review and then approve the document.

CLEANUP/REMOVAL ALTERNATIVES

The following removal action alternatives for the retention basin sediments at Site 31 have been identified and screened:

- No action;
- Capping of the sediments (e.g., clay cap with polyethylene liner); and
- Excavation and proper management/disposal of sediments.

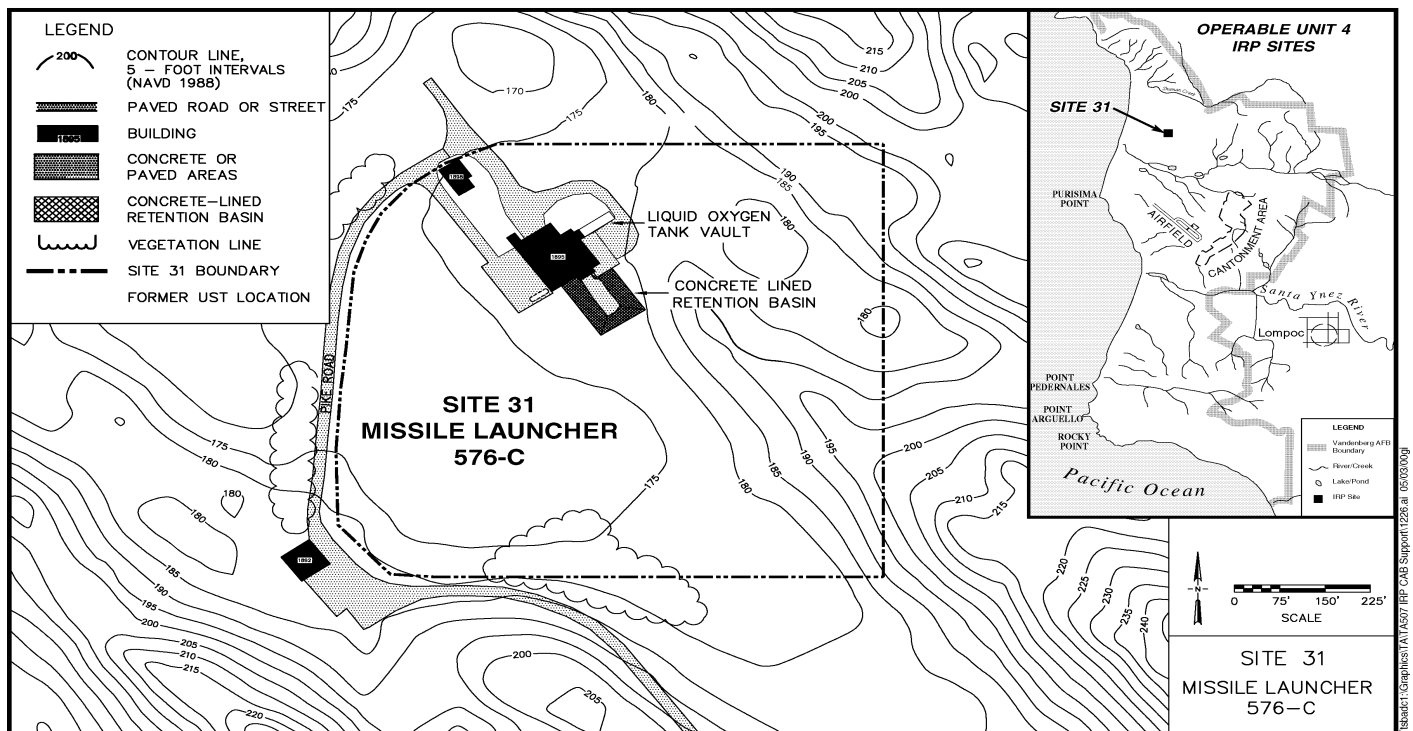
Vandenberg AFB has assessed cleanup alternatives at this site and recommends removal of retention basin water, removal of water from an adjacent former liquid oxygen (LOX) storage tank vault, and excavation and disposal of the retention basin sediments.

Vandenberg AFB is also in consultation with the USFWS to determine the most appropriate method of relocating the California red-legged frog. At present, the base is awaiting the USFWS Biological Opinion on this issue.

After removing retention basin water and sediments, the retention basin and LOX storage tank vault will be back-filled with clean construction fill to prevent a recurrence of ponding. Before the removal process begins, a proposed IRA plan will be drafted and approved by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the USFWS. The DTSC will prepare the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation as it considers the approval of the draft removal action plan. Once the EE/CA and Biological Opinion are received from the USFWS, public review and comments will be scheduled in accordance with CERCLA and the California Health and Safety Code. The public will then have 30 days to comment on the draft EE/CA.

The aforementioned documents are designed to significantly reduce potential risks to human and ecological receptors and will be an important step toward complete site cleanup and closure.

If you have questions about this site or any aspect of the IRP program, please contact Mr. Ron MacLelland, Community Relations Coordinator, 806 13th Street, Suite 116, Vandenberg AFB, CA 93437-5242.



Site 31 location map.

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